

have approved your Notice of Intent to Conduct Geothermal Resource Exploration Operations. If the lands are already leased, your operations may not unreasonably interfere with or endanger those other operations or other authorized uses, or cause unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands.

§ 3250.12 What general standards apply to exploration operations?

BLM-approved exploration operations must:

- (a) Meet all operational and environmental standards;
- (b) Protect public health, safety, and property;
- (c) Prevent unnecessary impacts on surface and subsurface resources;
- (d) Be conducted in a manner consistent with the principles of multiple use; and
- (e) Comply with the requirements of § 3200.4.

§ 3250.13 What additional BLM orders or instructions govern exploration?

BLM may issue the following types of orders or instructions:

- (a) Geothermal resource operational orders that contain detailed requirements of nationwide applicability;
- (b) Notices to lessees that contain detailed requirements on a statewide or regional basis;
- (c) Other orders and instructions specific to a field or area;
- (d) Conditions of approval contained in an approved Notice of Intent; and
- (e) Verbal orders that BLM will confirm in writing.

§ 3250.14 What types of operations may I propose in my application to conduct exploration?

(a) You may propose any activity fitting the definition of “exploration operations” in § 3200.1. Submit Form 3200-9, Notice of Intent to Conduct Geothermal Resource Exploration Operations, together with the information required under § 3251.11, and BLM will review your proposal.

(b) The exploration operations regulations do not address drilling wells intended for production or injection, which is covered in subpart 3260, or geothermal resources utilization, which is covered in subpart 3270.

Subpart 3251—Exploration Operations: Getting BLM Approval

§ 3251.10 Do I need a permit before I start exploration operations?

BLM must approve a Notice of Intent to Conduct Geothermal Resource Exploration Operations (NOI) before you conduct exploration operations. The approved NOI, including any necessary conditions for approval, constitutes your permit.

§ 3251.11 What information is in a complete Notice of Intent to Conduct Geothermal Resource Exploration Operations application?

To obtain approval of exploration operations on BLM-managed lands, your application must:

- (a) Include a complete and signed Form 3200-9, Notice of Intent to Conduct Geothermal Resource Exploration Operations that describes the lands you wish to explore;
- (b) For operations other than drilling temperature gradient wells, describe your exploration plans and procedures, including the approximate starting and ending dates for each phase of operations;
- (c) For drilling temperature gradient wells, describe your drilling and completion procedures, and include, for each well or for several wells you propose to drill in an area of geologic and environmental similarity:
 - (1) A detailed description of the equipment, materials, and procedures you will use;
 - (2) The depth of each well;
 - (3) The casing and cementing program;
 - (4) The circulation media (mud, air, foam, etc.);
 - (5) A description of the logs that you will run;
 - (6) A description and diagram of the blowout prevention equipment you will use during each phase of drilling;
 - (7) The expected depth and thickness of fresh water zones;
 - (8) Anticipated lost circulation zones;
 - (9) Anticipated temperature gradient in the area;
 - (10) Well site layout and design;
 - (11) Existing and planned access roads or ancillary facilities; and

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(12) Your source of drill pad and road building material and water supply.

(d) Show evidence of bond coverage (see § 3251.15);

(e) Estimate how much surface disturbance your exploration may cause;

(f) Describe the proposed measures you will take to protect the environment and other resources;

(g) Describe methods to reclaim the surface; and

(h) Include all other information BLM may require.

§ 3251.12 What action will BLM take on my Notice of Intent to Conduct Geothermal Resource Exploration Operations?

(a) When BLM receives your Notice of Intent to Conduct Geothermal Resource Exploration Operations, we will make sure it is complete and signed, and review it for compliance with the requirements of § 3200.4.

(b) If the proposed operations are located on lands described under § 3250.10(a)(2), we will consult with the Federal surface management agency before approving your Notice of Intent.

(c) We will check your Notice of Intent for technical adequacy and we may require additional information.

(d) We will notify you if we need more information to process your Notice of Intent, and suspend the review of your Notice of Intent until we receive the information.

(e) After our review, we will notify you whether we approved or denied your Notice of Intent and of any conditions of approval.

§ 3251.13 Once I have an approved Notice of Intent, how can I change my exploration operations?

Send BLM a complete and signed Form 3260-3, Geothermal Sundry Notice, which fully describes the requested changes. Do not proceed with the change in operations until you receive written approval from BLM.

§ 3251.14 Do I need a bond for conducting exploration operations?

(a) You must not start any exploration operations on BLM-managed lands until we approve your bond. You may meet the requirement for an exploration bond in two ways:

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(1) If you have an existing nationwide or statewide oil and gas exploration bond, provide a rider in an amount we have specified to include geothermal resources exploration operations; or

(2) If you must file a new bond for geothermal exploration, the minimum amounts are:

(i) \$5,000 for a single operation;

(ii) \$25,000 for all of your operations within a state; and

(iii) \$50,000 for all of your operations on public lands nationwide.

(b) See subparts 3214 and 3215 for additional details on bonding procedures.

§ 3251.15 When will BLM release my bond?

BLM will release your bond after you request it and we determine that you have:

(a) Plugged and abandoned all wells;

(b) Reclaimed the land and, if necessary, resolved other environmental, cultural, scenic, or recreational issues; and

(c) Complied with the requirements of § 3200.4.

Subpart 3252—Conducting Exploration Operations

§ 3252.10 What operational standards apply to my exploration operations?

You must keep exploration operations under control at all times by:

(a) Conducting training during your operation to ensure that your personnel are capable of performing emergency procedures quickly and effectively;

(b) Using properly maintained equipment; and

(c) Using operational practices that allow for quick and effective emergency response.

§ 3252.11 What environmental requirements must I meet when conducting exploration operations?

(a) You must conduct your exploration operations in a manner that:

(1) Protects the quality of surface and subsurface waters, air, and other natural resources, including wildlife, soil, vegetation, and natural history;

(2) Protects the quality of cultural, scenic, and recreational resources;